

[Acx I

Lady Windermere. No relations? [A -
pause.

Lord Windermere. None.

Lady Windermere. Rather curious, isn't it?

[Z.

Lord Windermere. [L C. ~] Margaret, I was saying to you—and I beg you to listen to me—that as far as I have known Mrs. Erlynne, she has conducted herself well. If years ago-----

Lady Windermere. Oh! [Crossing R C.] I don't want details about her life.

Lord Windermere. [C.] I am not going to give you any details about her life. I tell you simply this—Mrs. Erlynne was once honoured, loved, respected. She was well born, she had position—she lost everything—threw it away, if you like. That makes it all the more bitter. Misfortunes one can endure—they come from outside, they are accidents. But to suffer for one's own faults—ah!—there is the sting of life. It was twenty years ago, too. She was little more than a girl then. She had been a wife for even less time than you have.

Lady Windermere. I am not interested in her—and you should not mention this woman and me in the same breath. It is an error of taste. [Sitting R at desk.

Lord Windermere. Margaret, you could save this woman. She wants to get back into society, and she wants you to help her. [Crossing to her.

Lady Windermere. Me!

Lord Windermere. Yes, you.

Lady Windermere. How impertinent of her! [A

pause.

Lord Windermere. Margaret, I came to ask you a great favour, and I still ask it of you, though you have discovered what I had intended you should never have known that I have given Mrs. Erlynne a large sum of money. I want you to send her an invitation for our party to-night.

Lady Windermere. You are mad! [Standing L of her.

[Rises.

Lord Windermere. I entreat you. People may chatter about her, do chatter about her, of course, but they don't know anything definite against her. She has been to several houses—not to houses where you would go, I admit, but still to houses where women who are in what is called Society nowadays do go. That does not content her. She wants you to receive her once.

Lady Windermere. As a triumph for her, I suppose?

Lord Windermere. No, but because she knows that you are a